

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a computing environment comprising an online game service and a plurality of online game players playing the game at remote client computers that are connected to the game service, a method for automatically arbitrating at the game service a disputed outcome because of inconsistent game outcomes reported to the game service by the plurality of players, the method comprising steps for~~determining official results for a game session of an online game played with clients connected to an online gaming service, wherein each client includes a computing device executing the online game and has at least one player participating in the game session, comprising the steps of:~~

at the beginning of an online game session and prior to beginning the game, the game service requiring each of a plurality of players to register with an arbitration server at the game service so that in the event of any subsequent disconnect from the game session a record is retained at the game service of each player that agreed to play at the beginning of the game session irrespective of whether each player finished the game session;

the game service creating and storing a unique ID at the beginning of a game session for that session so that each registered player for that game session is identifiable as to that game session;

(a)at the conclusion of the online game session played by the plurality of registered players, receiving reports at the gaming service from at least one or more of the registered playersclients, wherein theeach report received from a registered playerclient includesing results showing the outcome of the game session for all registered players-participating-in-the game-session, as perceived by the online game executed on said client computer of a registered player that submitted a reportelient;

(b)the game service then automatically comparing the results of all reportedsed submitted to the gameing service-by-the-clients, to determine if any inconsistency exists in the outcome of the game session based on the results that were reported;

(e)if no inconsistency exists and if results are reported by all of the registered playersclients-initially-participating-in-the-game-session, the game service then declaring the

outcome of the game session based on a majority view as determined from each of the submitted reports using the results that were consistently reported as the official results for the game session; and

(d) otherwise, if either an inconsistency exists in the results that were reported or if not all of the clients initially registered for participating in the game session submitted a reported at the end of the game session results, the arbitration server of the game service then

applying a predefined set of arbitration rules using any previously determined trust ratings stored at the game service for of any of the registered players to determine the official results for the game session; and

thereafter, updating at the game service a trust rating for each of the registered players, based on events relating to how the game was played by each registered player, irrespective of whether a report was submitted by a player or not.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein each submitted~~the~~ report indicates whether connectivity to another client was lost during the game session.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 23, wherein if the submitted results that were reported~~ed~~ indicate that connectivity was lost with another client used by a player who registered, and the other client did not report results, the arbitration rules will determine that the client not reporting results simply disconnected and stopped participating in the game session before its completion.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 23, further comprising ~~at the step for~~of enabling a player~~client~~ that is unable to communicate with the gaming service using a preferred communication protocol because said player~~client~~ is being subjected to packet bombing, to instead employ at least a limited transmission to the gaming service using an alternative communication protocol that is unaffected by the packet bombing, said arbitration rules treating the limited transmission as an indication that said player~~client~~ may have been unable to communicate with the gaming service and other player~~clients~~ with the preferred communication protocol as a result of the packet bombing.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein a report from a player~~element~~ may indicate whether any event or condition was noted for a specific other player~~element~~ that is outside predefined parameters for play of the online game, where said event or condition ~~appears to indicate~~shows that the specific other player~~element~~ is executing a modified online game.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for updating a state of the game session that is stored by the gaming service when determining the official results by applying the arbitration rules.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the arbitration rules determine that a network filter was or was not~~may have been~~ applied by at least one player if the reports received by the gaming service include conflicting results for the game session.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for initially applying a predefined time interval for the game session, after which the gaming service will not consider any reports received from a player~~element~~ when determining the official results of the game session.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 12, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for enabling the players~~elements~~ to request an extension of time for the predefined time interval, if additional time is required to complete the game session.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~at the step~~ for requiring that the online game report the results of the game session after the game session is over, for all registered players for ~~perceived by the online game to be participants in~~ the game session.

15. (Currently Amended) A memory medium that stores an executable computer program that is tangibly embodied on a computer readable medium, machine instructions for carrying out the steps of Claim 1.

16. (Currently Amended) A server computing device used in an online gaming service for determining official results when the outcome for a game session of an online game that is played by a plurality of players is in dispute, each player using a client computing devices connected to the online gaming service, wherein each client computing device executes the online game ~~and has at least one player participating in the game session,~~ the server computing device comprising:

(a) a memory used for storing machine instructions;

(b) a network interface that couples the server computing device in communication with client computing devices participating in the game session;

(c) a processor that is coupled to the memory and to the network interface, said processor executing the machine instructions to carry out a plurality of functions, including:

at the beginning of an online game session and prior to beginning the game, the game service requiring each of a plurality of players to register with an arbitration server at the game service so that in the event of any subsequent disconnect from the game session a record is retained at the game service of each player that agreed to play at the beginning of the game session irrespective of whether each player finished the game session;

the game service creating and storing a unique ID at the beginning of a game session for that session so that each registered player for that game session is identifiable as to that game session;

(i) at the conclusion of the online game session played by the plurality of registered players, receiving reports at the gaming service from at least one or more of the registered players' clients, wherein each report received from a registered player's client includes results showing the outcome of the game session for all registered players participating in the game session, as perceived by the online game executed on said client computer of a registered player that submitted a report;

(ii) the game service then automatically comparing the results of all reported submitted to the gaming service by the clients, to determine if any inconsistency exists in the outcome of the game session based on the results that were reported;

(iii) if no inconsistency exists and if results are reported by all of the registered players' clients initially participating in the game session, the game service then declaring the outcome of the game session based on a majority view as determined

~~from each of the submitted reports using the results that were consistently reported as the official results for the game session; and~~

(iv) otherwise, if either an inconsistency exists in the results that were reported or if not all of the ~~clients~~ initially registered for participating in the game session submitted a reported at the end of the game session results, the arbitration server of the game service then

applying a predefined set of arbitration rules using any previously determined trust ratings stored at the game service for of any of the registered players to determine the official results for the game session; and

thereafter, updating at the game service a trust rating for each of the registered players, based on events relating to how the game was played by each registered player, irrespective of whether a report was submitted by a player or not.

17. (Currently Amended) The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein ~~the~~each submitted report indicates whether connectivity to another client computing device was lost during the game session.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) The server computing device of Claim 17~~8~~, wherein if the submitted results that were reported indicate that connectivity was lost with another client used by a player who registered, and the other client did not report results, the arbitration rules will determine that the client not reporting results simply disconnected and stopped participating in the game session before its completion.

20. (Currently Amended) The server computing device of Claim 17~~8~~, wherein the machine instructions executed by the processor further cause the processor to detect a transmission from a client computing device using a less preferred communication protocol, and to determine that said client computing device is using the less preferred communication protocol because said client computing device is being subjected to packet bombing, wherein the less preferred communication protocol is unaffected by packet bombing, said arbitration rules treating the transmission as an indication that said client computing device may have been unable to communicate with the gaming service and other client computing devices with a preferred communication protocol because of the packet bombing.

21. (Original) The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein a report indicating that an event or condition was noted for a specific other client computing device that is outside predefined parameters for play of the online game enables the server computing device to determine that the specific other client computing device is executing a modified online game.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Original) The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to update a state of the game session that is stored in the memory, when determining the official results by applying the arbitration rules.

26. (Currently Amended) The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the arbitration rules determine that a network filter was or was not~~may have been~~ applied by at least one player if the reports include conflicting results for the game session.

27. (Original) The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to apply a predefined time interval for the game session, after which the server computing device will not consider any reports received from a client computing device when determining the official results of the game session.

28. (Original) The server computing device of Claim 27, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to enable any of the client computing devices to request an extension of time for the predefined time interval, if additional time is required to complete the game session.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Cancelled)